A Look Back at 20 Years as an Open Access Publisher

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Introduction

In June 1989, I launched PACS-L, a LISTSERV mailing list. PACS-L was one of the first library-oriented mailing lists, and it was unusual in that it had a broad subject focus (public-access computer systems in libraries). Although PACS-L's greatest contribution may have been in raising librarians' awareness of the importance and potential of the then fledgling Internet, it was also the platform on which my initial scholarly digital publishing efforts were based.

In August 1989, I began my scholarly digital publishing efforts by launching *The Public-Access Computer Systems Review,* [1] one of the first e-journals on the Internet and the first open access journal in the field of library and information science. It was freely available, allowed authors to retain their copyrights, and had special copyright provisions for noncommercial use.[2]

By July 2004, all of my new works were under various versions of the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial License.

To date, my major open access publications have been:

- *The Public-Access Computer Systems Review*, founder and Editor-in-Chief, 37 issues, 1989-1996.
- *Public-Access Computer Systems News*, co-founder and co-editor with Dana C. Rooks, 39 issues, 1990-1992.
- *Scholarly Electronic Publishing Bibliography*, 75 versions, 1996-2009.
- *Scholarly Electronic Publishing Weblog*, 2001-present.
- *Open Access Bibliography: Liberating Scholarly Literature with E-Prints and Open Access Journals* (paperback and open access PDF file), published by the Association for Research Libraries, 2005.
- *DigitalKoans*, 2005-present.
- *Electronic Theses and Dissertations Bibliography*, 3 versions, 2005-2009.
- *Google Books Bibliography*, 4 versions, 2005-2009.
- *Scholarly Electronic Publishing Bibliography: 2008 Annual Edition* (paperback), 2009.

PACS-L, *The Public-Access Computer Systems Review*, and *Public-Access Computer Systems News* were published by the University of Houston Libraries. The *Scholarly Electronic Publishing Bibliography* and the *Scholarly Electronic Publishing Weblog* were also published by the University of Houston Libraries through version 64 of the bibliography (10/17/2006).

My digital press, Digital Scholarship, was established in April 2005. Digital Scholarship began publishing the *Scholarly Electronic Publishing Bibliography* and the *Scholarly Electronic Publishing Weblog* starting with version 65 of the bibliography (11/02/2006).

Other works listed above were published by Digital Scholarship.

Chronology

Below is a brief chronology of my digital publishing efforts from June 1989 through June 2009.

1989

- June 29, 1989. Established the PACS-L LISTSERV mailing list, acted as list owner and, later, as its first moderator.
- August 16, 1989. Established *The Public-Access Computer Systems Review* (*PACS Review*, also known as *PACS-R*).

1990

- 1990. Published 3 issues of *The Public-Access Computer Systems Review*, including the one described below.
- January 3, 1990. Published the first issue of *The Public-Access Computer Systems Review*. Articles were selected by the editors. They were distributed as ASCII files using the LISTSERV software; table of contents messages were e-mailed to subscribers.
- March 5, 1990. Established and acted as co-editor with Dana C. Rooks of *Public-Access Computer Systems News*, a free electronic newsletter. Acted as co-editor until the end of 1992. Published 12 issues in 1990. *The Public-Access Computer Systems News* was published by the University of Houston Libraries.
- August 30, 1990. Published the first version of "Library-Oriented BITNET Lists," a directory of mailing lists. Published 3 versions in 1990.

1991

- 1991. Published 2 issues of *The Public-Access Computer Systems Review*, including those described below.
- 1991. Published 11 issues of *Public-Access Computer Systems News*.
- Published 8 versions of "Library-Oriented Computer Conferences and Electronic Serials."
- August 26, 1991. Published the volume 2, no. 1 issue of *The Public-Access Computer Systems Review*. This was a special issue on open access journals, such *as Postmodern Culture* and *Psycoloquy*.

- October 29, 1991. Published the volume 2, no. 2 issue of *The Public-Access Computer Systems Review*. Adopted a more flexible *PACS Review* publication schedule that took advantage of electronic publishing capabilities and reduced article publication time.
- November 11, 1991. Changed *The Public-Access Computer Systems Review* to a peer-reviewed journal.
- November 15, 1991. Announced that I was stepping down as PACS-L moderator. PACS-L had over 3,100 subscribers at the time.

1992

- 1992. Published 8 issues of *The Public-Access Computer Systems Review*.
- 1992. Published 16 issues of *Public-Access Computer Systems News*.
- 1992. Published 9 versions of "Library-Oriented Computer Conferences and Electronic Serials."
- 1992. *The Public-Access Computer Systems Review*, Volume 1, 1990 was published as a paperback by the Library and Information Technology Association. Walt Crawford formatted a digital copy of the book as camera-ready copy for LITA at no cost (he did this for subsequent print versions as well).[3]
- 1992. *The Public-Access Computer Systems Review*, Volume 2, 1991 was published as a paperback by the Library and Information Technology Association.
- January 13, 1992. Established the PACS-P mailing list to distribute the University of Houston Libraries electronic publications and *Current Cites*.

1993

- 1993. Published 6 issues of *The Public-Access Computer Systems Review*.
- 1993. Published 4 versions of "Library-Oriented Lists and Electronic Serials."
- 1993. *The Public-Access Computer Systems Review*, Volume 3, 1992 was published as a paperback by the Library and Information Technology Association.

1994

- 1994. Published 7 issues of *The Public-Access Computer Systems Review*.
- 1994. *The Public-Access Computer Systems Review*, Volume 4, 1993 was published as a paperback by the Library and Information Technology Association.
- January 18, 1994. Published my last version of "Library-Oriented Lists and Electronic Serials." Subsequently, Ann Thornton and Steve Bonario maintained the document, then Wei Wu maintained it as a searchable Web site until 2006.
- January 29, 1994. Made *The Public-Access Computer Systems Review* and *Public-Access Computer Systems News* available via a Gopher server.

1995

- 1995. Published 5 issues of *The Public-Access Computer Systems Review*, including the one described below.
- 1995. *The Public-Access Computer Systems Review*, Volume 5, 1994 was published as a paperback by the Library and Information Technology Association.
- 1995. *Research and Development of Scholarly Information Dissemination Systems: Report for the Fiscal Year 1994, a Grant-in-Aid Research by the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture, Japan for the Year 1994/95* (06302076). Papers from *The Public-Access Computer Systems Review* were translated into Japanese and published as a paperback by the National Institute of Informatics.
- March 21, 1995. Published the volume 6, no. 1 issue of *The Public-Access Computer Systems Review*, the first HTML version of *The Public-Access Computer Systems Review*. Established a policy that allowed authors to update articles. This issue was composed of the first version of my "Network-Based Electronic Publishing of Scholarly Works: A Selective Bibliography." Fourteen versions were published in 1995.

1996

- 1996. Published 6 issues of *The Public-Access Computer Systems Review*.
- 1996. Published 3 versions of the *Scholarly Electronic Publishing Bibliography*, including the ones described below.
- 1996. Published 12 versions of "Network-Based Electronic Publishing of Scholarly Works: A Selective Bibliography," with the last version (no. 26) being published on October 25, 1996. Starting with version 23 (June 25, 1996), the bibliography was searchable.
- September 12, 1996. Announced that I was stepping down as *PACS Review* Editor-in-Chief at the end of 1996.
- October 25, 1996. Published the first version of the *Scholarly Electronic Publishing Bibliography* (*SEPB*), an open access, updated electronic book that provided references to new works related to scholarly electronic publishing, such as books, journal articles, magazine articles, technical reports, and white papers. The HTML bibliography was searchable.
- November 15, 1996. Published version 2 of the *Scholarly Electronic Publishing Bibliography*, adding a Word file version.
- December 17, 1996. Published version 3 of the *Scholarly Electronic Publishing Bibliography*, adding a PDF file version.

1997

- 1997. Published 11 versions of the *Scholarly Electronic Publishing Bibliography*, including the one described below.
- September 16, 1997. Published version 12 of the *Scholarly Electronic Publishing Bibliography*. Included the first version of *Scholarly Electronic Publishing Resources*.

1998

- 1998. Published 8 versions of the *Scholarly Electronic Publishing Bibliography*.

1999

- 1999. Published 6 versions of the *Scholarly Electronic Publishing Bibliography*.

2000

- 2000. Published 6 versions of the *Scholarly Electronic Publishing Bibliography*.

2001

- 2001. Published 5 versions of the *Scholarly Electronic Publishing Bibliography*.
- June 7, 2001. Began the *Scholarly Electronic Publishing Weblog*. Published posts daily as needed.

2002

- 2002. Published 6 versions of the *Scholarly Electronic Publishing Bibliography*, including the one described below
- 2002. Published *Scholarly Electronic Publishing Weblog* posts daily as needed.
- April 19, 2002. Published version 42 of the *Scholarly Electronic Publishing Bibliography*. Ceased publishing a corresponding Word version.

2003

- 2003. Published 6 versions of the *Scholarly Electronic Publishing Bibliography*.
- 2003. Published *Scholarly Electronic Publishing Weblog* posts weekly as needed.
- September 22, 2003. Established the SEPW@LISTSERV.UH.EDU mailing list and distributed the first ASCII version of the *Scholarly Electronic Publishing Weblog*.

2004

- 2004. Published 4 versions of the *Scholarly Electronic Publishing Bibliography*, including the one described below.
- 2004. Published *Scholarly Electronic Publishing Weblog* posts biweekly as needed.
- July 13, 2004. Published version 54 of the *Scholarly Electronic Publishing Bibliography* under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial License.

2005

- 2005. Published 4 versions of the *Scholarly Electronic Publishing Bibliography*.

- 2005. Published *Scholarly Electronic Publishing Weblog* posts biweekly as needed.
- March 2, 2005. The Association of Research Libraries published my *Open Access Bibliography: Liberating Scholarly Literature with E-Prints and Open Access Journals*. The book included an introduction to open access and references to over 1,300 works about it. It was published under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 2.5 License in print and PDF formats. The PDF version was freely available.
- April 20, 2005. Established Digital Scholarship, a digital press that publishes works about digital copyright, digital curation, digital repositories, open access, scholarly communication, and other digital information issues. Digital Scholarship publications are under versions of the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial License. (Until January 2006, it was called Escholarlypub.)
- April 20, 2005. Established *DigitalKoans*, a weblog that covers the same topics as Digital Scholarship does.
- August 10, 2005. Made a preprint of the "Open Access Webliography" available (coauthored with Adrian K. Ho).
- July 8, 2005. Published the first version of the *Electronic Theses and Dissertations Bibliography*.
- October 25, 2005. Published the first version of the *Google Book Search Bibliography*.

2006

- 2006. Published 6 versions of the *Scholarly Electronic Publishing Bibliography*, including the one described below.
- 2006. Published *Scholarly Electronic Publishing Weblog* posts biweekly as needed.
- 2006. Published *DigitalKoans* posts.
- January 8, 2006. Established the digital-scholarship.com domain to replace the escholarlypub.com domain.
- February 6, 2006. Published the *Open Access Bibliography Author Index* and the *Open Access Bibliography Title Index*.
- March 22, 2006. Published an HTML version of the *Open Access Bibliography: Liberating Scholarly Literature with E-Prints and Open Access Journals*.
- April 28, 2006. Published version 62 of the *Scholarly Electronic Publishing Bibliography*. Ceased publishing a corresponding Acrobat version.
- October 25-28, 2006. Created Google Custom Search Engines for the *Open Access Bibliography: Liberating Scholarly Literature with E-Prints and Open Access Journals*, the *Scholarly Electronic Publishing Bibliography*, and the *Scholarly Electronic Publishing Weblog*.
- November 1, 2006. Resigned my position as Assistant Dean for Digital Library Planning and Development at the University of Houston Libraries, where I had worked since November 1987 (previously as either Assistant Dean for Systems or Assistant Director for Systems).

- November 3, 2006. Migrated the *Scholarly Electronic Publishing Bibliography* from the University of Houston Libraries' servers to escholarlypub.com.
- December 14, 2006. Established the digital-scholarship.org domain.
- December 18, 2006. Announced the digital-scholarship.org domain, branding it and digital-scholarship.com under the name "Digital Scholarship."

2007

- 2007. Published 4 versions of the *Scholarly Electronic Publishing Bibliography*.
- 2007. Published *Scholarly Electronic Publishing Weblog* posts biweekly as needed.
- 2007. Published *DigitalKoans* posts.
- February 11-12, 2007. Redesigned the Digital Scholarship Web sites to give them a common look and feel. Published an HTML version of the "Open Access Webliography."
- March 14, 2007. Published the first annual PDF version of the *Scholarly Electronic Publishing Bibliography*.
- September 25-27, 2007. Redesigned the entire Digital Scholarship site. Converted version 69 of *SEPB* to the new design, and recoded all other site documents in XHTML and CSS to comply with the new design.

2008

- 2008. Published 4 versions of the *Scholarly Electronic Publishing Bibliography*, including the one described below.
- 2008. Published *Scholarly Electronic Publishing Weblog* posts monthly.
- 2008. Published *DigitalKoans* posts.
- January 6, 2008. Published *Institutional Repositories, Tout de Suite*.
- March 21, 2008. Became a member of the *Open Access Directory* Editorial Board. Helped build the initial Wiki.
- April 29, 2008. Published the second annual PDF version of the *Scholarly Electronic Publishing Bibliography*. In this version, links were added for e-prints of published articles from disciplinary archives and institutional repositories, and many additional links were added for freely available versions of articles from publishers.
- May 12, 2008. Published version 2 of the *Electronic Theses and Dissertations Bibliography*.
- May 27, 2008. Published version 2 of the *Google Book Search Bibliography*.
- June 9, 2008. Published version 72 of the *Scholarly Electronic Publishing Bibliography*. In this version, links were added for e-prints of published articles from disciplinary archives and institutional repositories, and many additional links were added for freely available versions of articles from publishers.
- June 14, 2008. Authorized using the *Open Access Bibliography: Liberating Scholarly Literature with E-Prints and Open Access Journals* as the basis for a new wiki bibliography on the *Open Access Directory*, called the *Bibliography of Open Access*.
- October 27, 2008. Published *Author's Rights, Tout de Suite*.

- December 9, 2008. Published version 3 of the *Google Book Search Bibliography*

2009

- 2009. Published 3 versions of the *Scholarly Electronic Publishing Bibliography*.
- 2009. Published *Scholarly Electronic Publishing Weblog* posts monthly.
- 2009. Published *DigitalKoans* posts.
- January 20, 2009. Published version 3 of the *Electronic Theses and Dissertations Bibliography*.
- May 5, 2009. Published the *Scholarly Electronic Publishing Bibliography: 2008 Annual Edition* as a paperback under a Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial 3.0 United States License. (The XHTML version that this paperback was based on was freely available.)
- June 29, 2009. Published version 4 of the *Google Book Search Bibliography*.

Articles about These Publications

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Crawford, Walt. "Talking About Public Access—PACS-L's First Decade.*" Information Technology and Libraries* 19 (September 2000): 112-115.

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Piper, Alison I. Review of *LIBRES: Library and Information Science Electronic Journal* and *Public-Access Computer Systems Review*. *Library and Information Science Research* 20, no. 1 (1998): 108-110.

Tennant, Roy. Review of the *Open Access Bibliography: Liberating Scholarly Literature with E-Prints and Open Access Journals*, by Charles W. Bailey, Jr. *Current Cites* 16, no. 3 (2005). http://currentcites.org/2005/2005.16-3

Notes

1. In 1989, the global network was much smaller and more fragmented than it is today, and the primary information access tools were e-mail, FTP, mailing lists, telnet (terminal emulation), and Usenet newsgroups. In March 1989, Tim Berners-Lee wrote "Information Management: A Proposal," which tried to persuade CERN officials to support a global hypertext system (it was not called the World Wide Web until October 1990, when he coded the first server and browser). Gopher servers, which represented a significant advance in information access, would not become available until 1991, and NCSA Mosaic, an early Web browser that ignited interest in the Web, until 1993. You can place my publications in the context of the development of the Internet by consulting the *Hobbes' Internet Timeline and Internet History*. Thanks to Robin N. Downes, then Director of the University of Houston Libraries, for his strong support for my digital publishing efforts from 1989-1996.

2. You can place my publications in the context of the development of the open access movement by consulting the *Timeline of the Open Access Movement*.

3. Printed annual versions of the *The Public-Access Computer Systems Review* were published at the recommendation of the journal's editorial board, which was concerned with the problem of limited Internet access by some readers during this early period.